

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-06 ISO-00 IO-10 SSO-00 NSCE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

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INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY

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AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL BOMBAY PRIORITY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA PRIORITY

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY

AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY

AMCONSUL MADRAS PRIORITY

USLO PEKING

CINCPAC

USUN NEW YORK 1832

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 9188

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: X-GDS-1

TAGS: PINS, PINT, IN

SUBJ: PARLIAMENT CONVOKED FOR JULY 21

1. THE GOVERNMENT WIRE SERVICE, PTI, HAS JUST ANNOUNCED THAT THE
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PRESIDENT HAS SUMMONED THE LOK SABHA TO MEET ON JULY 21 FOR

ONE WEEK. EARLIER IN THE DAY WE WERE TOLD BY THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF THE RAJA SABHA, GODEY MURAHARI, THAT THE PARLIAMENT WOULD BE CONVOKED BY THE GOVERNMENT TO RATIFY THE STATE OF EMERGENCY. HE SAID THE FACT THAT MP'S WERE IMPRISONED WOULD NOT AFFECT THE VALIDITY OF THE PROCEEDINGS. HE REPEATED WHAT WE HAVE BEEN TOLD EARLIER BY CONGRESS PARTY WHIP, V. MAHAJAN, I.E., IF OPPOSITION MP'S ATTEMPTED TO DISRUPT THE SESSIONS, THEY WOULD BE REMOVED. MURAHARI SAID THAT IN THE DEBATE THE OPPOSITION WOULD BE ABLE TO CRITICIZE THE GOI AND THE STATE OF EMERGENCY FREELY PROVIDED THEY OBSERVED THE USUAL RULES OF PROCEDURE. HE ALSO WAS OF THE OPINION THAT THE DAILY REPORTS ON PROCEEDINGS OF THE PARLIAMENT WOULD BE PUBLISHED BY THE PARLIAMENT THE DAY AFTER EACH SITTING BUT WAS NOT SURE THESE WOULD BE ALLOWED TO BE REPORTED IN THE PRESS. IT SEEMS CERTAIN TO EVERYONE WITH WHOM WE HAVE DISCUSSED THE MATTER THAT THE GOI WILL BE ABLE TO OBTAIN PARLIAMENTARY RATIFICATION FOR THE STATE OF EMERGENCY AND THUS TO CONTINUE THE AUTHORITARIAN REGIME UNDER THE CLOAK OF CONSTITUTIONALITY.

2. THE UNI WIRE SERVICE ALSO REPORTS THAT NEW RESTRICTIONS HAVE BEEN PLACED WITH IMMEDIATE EFFECT ON ADMISSION TO THE HALLS OF PARLIAMENT AND ITS OFFICES. ONLY MP'S, MEMBERS OF THEIR FAMILIES, AND MEMBERS OF STATE LEGISLATURES ARE NOW PERMITTED ENTRY. THE DESPATCH SPECIFICALLY REPORTS THAT ALL NEWSMEN ARE BARRED FROM PARLIAMENT, WHETHER OR NOT IT IS IN SESSION. NO MENTION IS MADE OF THE EFFECT OF THIS ON THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS, WHICH WE ARE CHECKING. WE DOUBT DIPLOMATS WILL BE ALLOWED ENTRY IF NEWSMEN ARE EXCLUDED. IT WOULD APPEAR AS THOUGH GOVT POLICY WILL BE TO CAREFULLY CONTROL PUBLIC DISSEMINATION OF WHATEVER HAPPENS DURING THE PARLIAMENTARY SESSION. MURAHARI ALSO TOLD US THAT A KEY CONSIDERATION IN THE TIMING OF A RECONVENING OF PARLIAMENT (HE PROFESSED TO BE UNAWARE OF THE EXACT DATE ON THE MORNING OF JULY 9) WAS THE HEALTH OF LOK SABHA SPEAKER DHILLON. DHILLON HAD BEEN HOSPITALIZED LAST WEEK WITH SUSPECTED HEART TROUBLE AND THE GOVT WOULD HAVE BEEN RELUCTANT TO HAVE THE LOWER HOUSE MEET WITH DEPUTY SPEAKER SWELL AS THE ONLY PRESIDING OFFICER (SWELL IS NOT A CONGRESS PARTY MP AND OCCASIONALLY HAS MADE DECISIONS FROM THE CHAIR WHICH PARTY MEMBERS HAVE FOUND UNPALATABLE).
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